

Remarks

1. The Applicant is grateful to the Examiner for indicating that claims 2, 4 to 6, 13, 20, 21 and 24 are allowable and that claims 15 to 18 comprise allowable matter.
2. The applicant has amended claims 1, 7 and 12 in a manner believed to patentably distinguish the present invention over the combined teachings of Seaholtz et al (US5812786) and Doshi et al (US6219339).
3. A particular problem with the introduction of VDSL systems is that of managing and controlling the subscriber link to allow remote status and performance monitoring of the link and to perform management operations which require downloading of information and commands. A further requirement is that of providing synchronization between the transmitters and receivers at the exchange and subscriber ends of the links. This synchronization of transmitter and receiver is essential where the digital data transmitted over the link has been scrambled to provide an even distribution of binary ones and zeros. The present invention addresses the above problems by providing an engineering operations channel in the form of a sequence of ATM Adaptation Layer (AAL) minicells carried over the line between the line termination equipment and the subscriber terminal. This channel is rendered wholly independent of the protocol or protocols employed for VDSL transport. It is therefore an inherent feature of the present invention that the engineering operations channel is a separate channel independent of any transport channels. Consequently, claims 1, 7 and 12 have been amended to this latter feature.
4. It is apparent from the disclosure of Doshi that that the signalling sent over a point to point LLC connection where AAL2 uses a predefined LLC is not independent

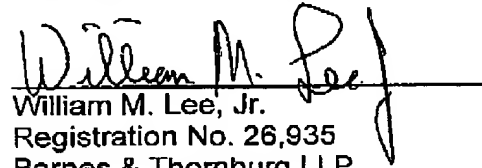
of any transport channels. Thus, the combination of Seaholtz and Doshi does not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations of claims 1, 7 and 12.

5. The rejection of claims 19, 22 and 23 is moot in view of the foregoing.

6. In view of the fact that all of the independent claims of the present application have already been deemed as allowable or have been amended to patentable subject matter, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now fully in condition for allowance, and such action is solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,



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